

## **Give Us a Sign!**

We continue our journey with the Israelites in this week's readings through Numbers. While the Israelites' physical location has changed, much remains the same. Moses is still their fearless leader. There are still festivals and offerings to be structured, and seemingly endless names to read in the census. The Israelite people are still wandering in the wilderness, waiting for God to guide them into the Promised Land.

These are same people who saw the Red Sea miraculously part as they fled from the Egyptians, who watched those same waters close over their pursuers. These are the people who ate manna, bread given from Heaven. Of all people groups in history, surely the Israelites, fresh out of Egypt, would trust God wholeheartedly, right?

Nope. The Israelite people are still doubtful of God's provision. We read of revolts and rebellions, of griping and the community turning away from God.

There's an internal rebellion over leadership of the priesthood. The earth splits open, consuming whole families. Aaron's rod, an old, withered wooden staff, grows buds that flower and produce almonds ready for eating (Numbers 17), a physical sign of God's decision to make Aaron and his descendants the head priests of the community. Surely this physical sign will finally cause the Israelites to trust God, right?

Nope again.

Enemy kings and their armies are defeated left and right. A donkey even talks, proving that God can use the most stubborn animals to communicate to His loved ones (Numbers 22). Surely after these physical signs, the people would trust God to provide for all their needs.

Spoiler alert: They still don't trust God.

But through it all, God's justice is revealed. He will not settle for disorder, righting the community in its worship practices. The Lord will not let poison words seep into His community without providing the healing source. Nor will the Lord let obstacles like enemies or rebellious people stop Him from following through on His promise.

Our assigned readings for this week conclude with two more stories of provision: Joshua is named successor by Moses, and Zelophehad's five daughters-Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Miclah, and Tirzah-are guaranteed an inheritance in the Promised Land. Naming Joshua as a leader proves God still cares for the entire Israelite community and will fulfill His promise to them, even with all of their communal rebellion. Ensuring the daughters' inheritance demonstrates God's commitment to individuals, regardless of society's expectations. These two events continue to show God's dual provision to the community and to the individual.

Let this week's readings encourage you to stop and consider the many ways in which God provides for you and your community. Allow these provisions to increase your faith and trust in God and consider the ways that you could be part of His provision to others.

~ **Brittany Kooi**

**March 5th Readings**  
NUMBERS 19:1-21:35

**March 6th Readings**  
NUMBERS 22:1-24:25

**March 7th Readings**  
NUMBERS 25:1-26:65

**March 8th Readings**  
NUMBERS 27:1-29:40

**March 9th Readings**  
NUMBERS 30:1-31:54

**March 10th Readings**  
NUMBERS 32:1-33:56